

Every time an American goes to pay her credit card bill, she sees a small number at the top of the page indicating her credit limit. That number is a visible reminder of just how much she can borrow before she gets cut off. No matter how much she wants to spend, that number is her limit.

Not so for Congress. When Congress wants to borrow more money, it changes the law.

Since 1917, the amount of money Congress can borrow on behalf of the American people has been set by law. The debt limit keeps us from obligating our fellow citizens to repay an unlimited amount of money that is used by Congress for the federal budget. But there is a problem with this system because a simple majority of Members can increase this limitation on our nation's debt. In fact, the debt limit has been increased scores of times since 1917. And, since Democrats took control of Congress, the limit has been raised \$5.33 trillion.

Today, the House voted to raise its own "credit limit" again, this time by \$1.9 trillion. This equals an additional \$6,157 of debt burden for every American. I voted "no" because it is past time for some fiscal discipline in Washington.

It is no simple task to wean Congress of its addiction to spending, but the debt limit tethers Congress to reality. Every time a Congressional majority raises the debt limit, we are reminded that the bill on our national credit card is coming due. That is why I introduced a bill to require a three-fifths super-majority vote to raise the debt limit in the future.

Congress last voted to increase the debt limit on December 16, 2009. Since then, House Democrats passed seven resolutions congratulating sports figures or teams and twenty-three resolutions honoring individuals, entities or causes. They have passed five bills naming post offices and authorized \$50 million to buy and build a park in the Virgin Islands. Not one thing has been done to reduce spending or lower the deficit.

Congress needs every possible incentive to get its fiscal house in order. My resolution requires that a debt limit increase be voted on separately – not hidden in another bill. And, with a super-majority requirement, raising the debt will not be quite so simple.

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